possibilities for filling up that gap. And that is why I said that one would like to fill up that gap through our present plants, through expansions and so on. If we get more money, then we will certaily try new plants. But a new plant is very costly. Vizag is a very costly plant. He mentioned Rs. 2,500 crores, Rs. 4,000 crores and so on. Now we are talking of Rs. 6,000 croresor Rs. 7,000 crores for a steel plant, which will go to Rs. 10,000 crores. Whether it would be better to put Rs. 10,000 crores in one steel plant or to have a number of steel plants dispersed all over the country is something to which my friend also will have to apply his mind.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Nirmal Chatterjee, be very quick because time is running out.

SHRI NIRMAL CHATTERJEE : Sir, the situation is very intersting. When the integrated steel plant immediately after independence were take in the public sector the argument was that the private sector did not have enough funds and the public sector had. The situation in the course of the last three Plan period is exactly the reverse. Now the Public sector does not have enough funds for the steel sector. It seems that our expectation is that the private sector can fork out a few thousand crore of rupees. That is the development in terms of our planning. My question is that the attempt has been there for quite a long time. The Birlas were aspiring for an integrated steel plant, on the question of prestige or what, I do not know. Now when he talks about electric steel furnaces...

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Chatterjee, if you want an answer, you have to stop now. Otherwise the question Hour will be over.

SHRI NIRMAL CHATTERJEE : Okay, Sir. I would like to know whether proposals from MRTP companies are also being considered for integrated steel plants in the private sector.

SHRI K. C. PANT : Sir, some composite units have been allowed, but these are smaller ones. These are not big integrated steel plants.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mini-steel plants.

SHRI K. C. PANT : Mini-steel plants of a slightly larger capacity. The only integrated steel plant in line with the public sector steel plants is the Tata steel plant. The others are very much smaller. If my friend gives me notice as to which particular one he is reffering to, I shall find out the position.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWER TO QUESTIONS

Visit by Minister of Agricultur to drought-hit Areas of Karnataka

*85. SHRI F. M. KHAN : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that he recently visited the drought affected areas of Karnataka ;

(b) whether Government propose to supply fre . foodgrains to Karnataka as a drought relief measure ; and

(c) what quantum of relief has been released to Karntaaka so far ?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI BUTA SINGH) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) 77,100 tonnes of foodgrains have been allocated, free of cost, to the State Government of Karnataka for distribution at subsidised rates amongst the workers engaged in NRE P/RLEGP works. In addition, the States Government has also been told that they can distribute foodsgains at subsidised rates amongst the workers engaged in drought relief works and that the subsidy and cost of handling at the reate of Rs. 200/- per tonnes will be borne by the Central Governemnt.

(c) A ceiling of Rs. 53.31 crores has been sanctioned to the Karnataka Government so far for drought relief during 1985-86. A Central Team has visited the State recently against the Third Memorandum of the State Government. On receipt of the Team's report and recommendation of the High Level Committee on Relief, further amount of Central Assistance will be sanctioned.

Hydro-geological surveys in the Rayalaseema area of Andhra Pradesh

*86. SHRI ADINARAYANA REDDY : Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether any hydro-geological surveys are being made in the Rayalaseema area of Andhra Pradesh; and

(b) if so, what are the findings of the surveys regarding the ground water development and its potential?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND) : (a) Hydro-geological surveys have been completed in about 82 per cent of the Rayalaseema area and the remaining area is proposed to be covered by 1987-88.

(b) The surveys have revealed that the area has utilisable ground-water potential of 6.1 lakh hectare metres out of which 1.5 lakh hectare mentes have been exploited for creating an irrigation potential of 4.6 lakh hectares.

Import of Billets for mini-steel plants

*87. SHRI K. VASUDEVA PANICKER : Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the State owned consumers of steel products like National Thermal Power Corporation, Delhi Development Authority and Fertilisers Corporation of India have been permitted to import billets for the mini-steel plants to re-roll for meeting their requirements, if so, what are the details of the quantity to be imported every year alongwith the amount of foreign exchange to be spent thereon ; and

(b) what are the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI K. C. PANT). (a) and (b) To meet shortfalls in domestic availability of bars and rods and light structurals for consumers in the public sector as well as others, the import of about three lakh tonnes of billets valued at about Rs. 80 crores has been ordered during April, 1985-January, 1986. The imported billets are to be got converted into bars and rods/light structurals by the consumers themselves through the re-rolling facilities available in the country.

Iron contents of ore of Gue and Chirea iron ore mines

*88 SHRI INDRADEEP SINHA : Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that about 5 and 50 lakh tonnes of iron-ore lie accumulated at the pit-heads of Gue and Chirea iron ore mines respectively ;

(b) whether it is a fact that the iron-ore requirements of IISCO, Burnpur are largely being met by purchases from private iron ore mines of Orissa ;

(c) whether it is a fact that the iron content of ore from these areas is very low as claimed by the IISCO authorities ;

(d) whether it is also a fact that the Geological Survey of India has put the iron content of Chirea ore at an average of 63 percent ; and

(e) if so, what steps are being taken by Government to direct IISCO authorities to purchase iron ore from these mines to avoid large scale unemployment ?